



AFRICAN VOICES OF SCIENCE

Background

Information is a vital resource during an emergency. Yet, COVID-19 is sparking significant fear and misinformation across the world. To promote access to reliable evidence and information, local experts must be ready, available and prepared to speak credibly in ways that resonate locally.

Currently, significant misinformation around the research and development of new tools, from vaccines and therapeutics to diagnostics and disease surveillance, is hampering Africa's ability to proactively shape its research agenda. Moreover, misinformation could slow the development and delivery of innovation – impeding clinical trial recruitment and the acceptability and uptake of new tools and measures to prevent, treat and diagnose diseases that holds back the development of our continent.

The COVID-19 crisis has continued this trend, at a time when it's vital for local experts to be providing sound, factual information to help people interpret data and guidance, understand risks and appropriately respond to their local context. From public health to scientific research to the economy, there is a great deal of misinformation and speculation being spread via traditional and social media. However, innovations in medical research over recent years have led to incredible achievements for public health in Africa.

About the initiative

The **African Voices of Science** initiative aims to provide a platform for trusted African science leaders and health experts to champion research and development in Africa and share reliable information with African populations, through social media and media coverage.

By amplifying credible voices who can speak up for research and development and shift the narrative on COVID-19 in Africa, we can reinforce the importance of increased investment in the R&D sector while building trust in health innovation. The initiative will provide African communities with reliable information on the development of COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and diagnostics, as well as information about other common diseases on the continent. Experts will also be given a platform to share Africa-led research and development innovations with the wider public.

Topics covered will range from COVID-19 vaccine trials, to emerging new research in infectious diseases. Through expert commentary and analysis, we will hear their perspectives and potential solutions to our health concerns.

About Speak Up Africa

Headquartered in Dakar, Senegal, Speak Up Africa is a strategic communications and advocacy organization dedicated to catalyzing leadership, enabling policy change, and increasing awareness for sustainable development in Africa – particularly around issues such as sanitation, immunization, malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs). Speak Up Africa is committed to promoting research and development (R&D) and encouraging scientific innovations as part of public discourse in Africa.